

FY 11 Region 1 Inventory and Monitoring Proposal #2 Willamette Valley NWRC

Inventory and Monitoring of Streaked Horned Larks on Agricultural Lands of the Willamette Valley NWRC

Recent studies by WVNWRC and OSU (2005-2010) have shown that agricultural lands on Willamette Valley Refuges are magnets for breeding streaked horned larks (SHLs), a federal candidate species. These birds have experienced serious population declines throughout its range, but still have a stronghold in the central Willamette Valley. However, they are selective as to habitat use and farming practices make a significant difference in nest site selection and nest success. The Willamette Valley Refuges use conventional agricultural (both with cooperative farming and force account) to provide winter forage for Canada geese on a large portion of the Complex. At times these activities can be in direct conflict with breeding SHLs.

The Refuge proposes to inventory breeding SHL pairs and monitoring nesting activity on select portions of suitable agricultural habitat found on the WVNWRC. The largest breeding populations are found on W. L. Finley NWR, followed by Baskett Slough NWR and Ankeny NWR. This work would be cost-shared with Oregon State University, who would be assisting with the inventories. Warden Farms (cooperative farmer on W.L. Finley NWR) would contribute agricultural activities (manipulates habitat with tillage, spraying, etc.) that influence SHL breeding habitat.

This project would provide valuable information about habitat preferences, predation threats, timing of farm practices, etc., and will help avoid inadvertent nest destruction from agricultural operations. This project fits the Strategies of Goal 9 of the preferred alternative within the Draft WVNWRC CCP. Information will contribute to the knowledge base regarding SHL preferences throughout its range and would be made available at annual meeting of the SHL Working Group.

The work would be conducted by contract with research scientists from Oregon State University using survey protocols developed from the past two years. These protocols will be refined in order for future use in SHL surveys. All work would be summarized in an annual report.

Budget Request: \$18,000

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